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Responsible fisheries  
summary : First Nations  
Fisherman's Training  
Atlantic Region







# RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES



FIRST NATIONS  
FISHERMEN'S TRAINING  
ATLANTIC REGION

NOVEMBER 2000

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## INTRODUCTION

Following the Supreme Court decision in the Marshall Case, First Nations communities indicated their intent to increase fishing on a commercial basis. As interest in the commercial fishery grew, many Band leaders recognized that to develop safe, sustainable, and commercially successful fishing operations, aboriginal harvesters would need to further develop their technical knowledge and skill.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), committed to supporting aboriginal harvesters as they pursue fishing commercially, recognized that a comprehensive training of First Nations harvesters could best be accomplished through a coordinated approach.

As such, DFO requested the Fishing Technology Network, an organization of fishers, industry organizations, researchers, and governments that fosters collaboration among network members, to set in motion a process that from the outset would involve aboriginals in the design and delivery of responsible fishing courses to best meet their specific needs.

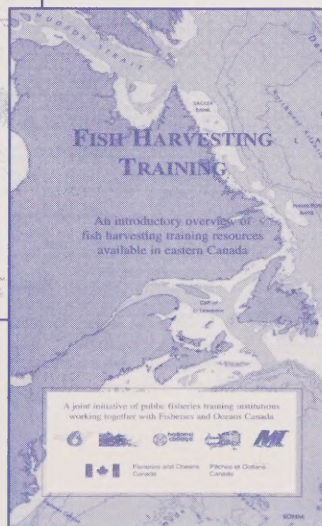
## Technical Working Group Formed

As a first step in the process, the Network organized a meeting with representatives from the five Fisheries Schools located in the Atlantic Provinces and Quebec. The result was the formation of a Technical Working Group comprised of representatives from the

Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APC), the five Provincial Fisheries Schools, and DFO.



The Technical Group, co-chaired by APC and DFO, held four consultations with First Nations people in various locations in eastern Canada and produced two brochures, one outlining training resources available and the other summarizing fish harvesting training that had been delivered in First Nations Communities.



## Training Initiatives Undertaken

Approval was given by the Working Group for four training projects to be undertaken by First Nation communities with support from provincial training institutes. These projects included the development of:

- a mentor training program and video;
- a process for screening training candidates;
- Vessel maintenance training study and video; and
- a training module for the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing Operations;

The APC's Client Needs Assessment Study and the Micmac-Maliseet Institute's program of First Nations Summer Science Camps and Enrichment Saturdays already underway provided input into the work of the Technical Group.

## Training Conference Organized

The efforts of the Working Group culminated with a First Nations Fishermen's Training Conference held in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia from September 26-27, 2000. The conference provided a forum for presenting the results of various training initiatives and for the sharing of experiences and resources gained.





## TRAINING INITIATIVES

Several training projects undertaken by native peoples with support from the fisheries schools will serve as a basis for the future, long-term planning of First Nations Fishermen's Training.

### Client Needs Assessment Atlantic Study By APC

During the first meeting of the Technical Working Group, the APC reported that its staff was completing a needs assessment of training issues of First Nations people that could prove useful to the work of the Technical Group. The APC agreed to share its findings as they became available.

In a series of meetings conducted by APC with First Nations fishery representatives the following training issues were raised:

#### *Requirements for certification*

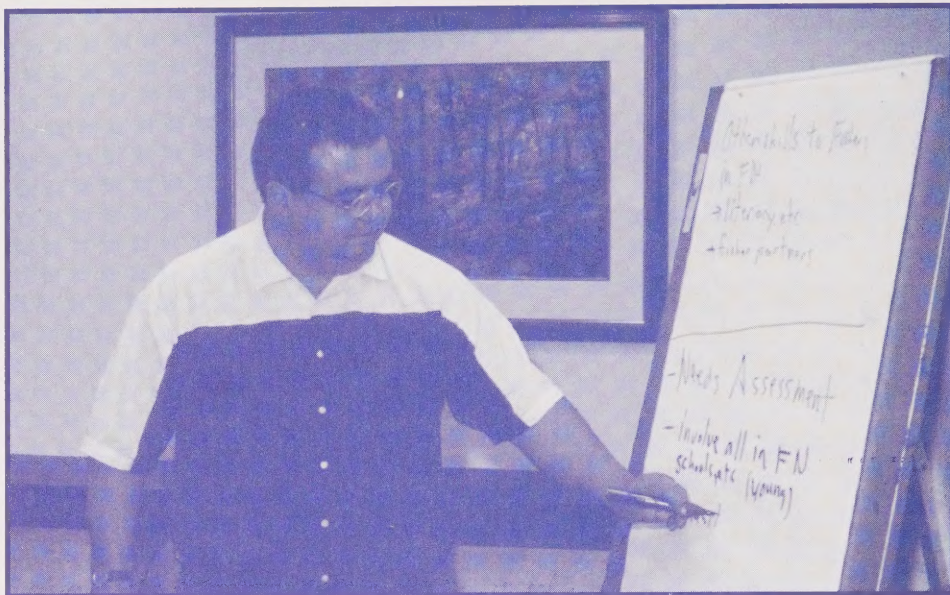
First Nations harvesters lack knowledge of certification requirements. Information is needed with regards to levels of certification and requirements needed to achieve each level. A particular concern is the requirement for sea time. This is viewed as a major problem for native communities where fishing commercially is relatively new.

#### *Delivery mechanisms*

Native fishermen also identified course delivery mechanisms as a concern. Most harvesters want flexibility in course delivery, preferring courses be delivered on site in their respective communities.

#### *Screening of applicants*

The need for a screening process to select candidates for professional fish harvester training was viewed as crucial. Needed is a screening and selection process that identifies



John G. Paul, Executive Director, APC, addressing training needs of First Nations Fishermen.

candidates with the abilities and aptitude for the fishery. A screening tool that would weed out those with little aptitude for fishing was seen as a positive step in maximizing the use of limited funds.

#### *Cost of training*

First Nations Bands that are relatively small and Bands that have not entered into an interim fishing agreement with DFO raised the issue of funding for training. More information is required on actual costs related to training and how funds can be accessed.

### Needs Assessment and Plan for Fisheries Training Miawpukek Band

As a first step in formulating a long-term plan for fisheries training, the Conne River Miawpukek Band in Newfoundland with support from the Marine Institute determined the Band's human resources and infrastructure in terms of its harvesting, aquaculture, processing, and fisheries science capabilities and using this, identified training needs.

Based on the needs assessment, a training plan was established to be delivered in four phases commencing September 2000 and running through to April 2002. All training is to be delivered at Conne River using the Marine Institute's community-based model.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRAINING PLAN

- 20 Band members trained;
- Training at three levels:
  - Entry:* vessels up 20 feet,
  - Intermediate:* vessels up to 65 feet, and
  - High:* vessels 65 feet & over;
- Fishery to be multi-species;
- Aquaculture output 1000 mt;
- 60-75% of all processing to be completed at Conne River;
- Band to develop fisheries related science capabilities.





### Mentor Training Study by the Big Cove Band

The Technical Group consultations recommended fishermen's training include a "mentoring" component involving practicing skippers trained as instructors. The Big Cove Band in New Brunswick, with assistance from fisheries training specialist, Jim McLevey, and support from a community project team and the New Brunswick School of Fisheries, conducted a study on how to implement a "mentoring" process in conjunction with an evaluation of the training programs that had been delivered at Big Cove.

#### Objectives of the pilot project

- a) Identify steps needed to implement a mentoring program;
- b) Develop a matrix of competency levels required by a mentor;
- c) Establish a mentor training process; and
- d) Review training conducted in Big Cove to identify any training "gaps".

#### Study Results

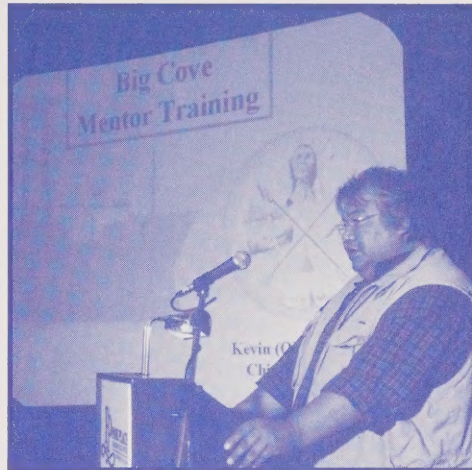
A mentor was defined as :

"a trusted experienced advisor, councillor, guide, coach, and tutor."

Steps to implement a "mentoring" process were identified:

#### Step 1- Identify existing skill levels

To accomplish this, two skill profiles, one for fishing vessel operator (under 50 feet) and the other for a deck hand, were developed and used as



Project initiative representative, Kevin Augustine, Big Cove Band

benchmarks to evaluate the fisheries training conducted at Big Cove.

#### Step 2 - Address gaps in training

A technical training plan addressing the "gaps" in fishermen's training was proposed for the fall of 2000. The plan proposes that 66 individuals participate in further training. From these trained fishermen, a group will be selected to attend mentor training.

#### Step 3 -Identify competency areas of a mentor

These are:

- Fishing operations
- Vessel operations
- Vessel maintenance
- Vessel management
- Fisheries management

#### Step 4 - Identify requirements of a mentor

These were identified as:

- technical knowledge
- credibility within the community
- human relations skills
- teaching skills
- communication skills
- fluency in Mi'kmaq and English

#### Step 5 - Implement mentor program

A group of fishermen fully trained in mentorship will be available by the spring of 2001. At that time, the mentor program will be implemented as an integral part of all training for fishermen.



Practical application of Mentorship program.



### Screening of Training Candidates by the Conne River Band

During the Technical Working Group consultations with First Nations peoples, APC expressed the need to develop a screening process for selecting prospective candidates for fishermen's training. The Conne River Band in Newfoundland with technical assistance from the Marine Institute agreed to undertake a study to develop a screening process. The purpose of the study was to:

- identify a standardized aptitude test; and
- develop an information package and self-appraisal form.

#### *The Screening Process*

The screening process developed requires all applicants to complete the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT). Test scores indicating basic skill levels in areas such as problem solving and number operation are used to identify those students who could benefit from remedial instruction prior to the start of training and to counsel candidates on the likelihood of success in fishermen's training. A database of CAAT scores is to be maintained to trace the correlation between test scores and success in training. Once sufficient data is collected, norms will be established to help predict the likelihood of success of future applicants.

#### *Information package*

Consultations with ten experience fishermen and a review of the occupational profiles developed by the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters provided input into the development of a screening information package consisting of:



*Project initiative representative, Ross Hicks, Conne River Band.*

- An information session
- A package of handouts
- A self-appraisal form

#### Information session

All applicants attend a 90-minute information seminar facilitated by experienced fishermen who provide information on and insight into fish harvesting as a career.

#### Package of handouts

Each applicant receives handouts describing hours of work, working conditions, skills needed for success in fishing, pros and cons of fishing as a



career, and the key factors to consider before choosing fishing as a career, providing a realistic snapshot of what is involved in fish harvesting.

#### Self-appraisal form

Applicants also complete a self-appraisal form. Questions on life style, ethics and values, general competencies, fishing-specific competencies, and entrepreneurship help candidates explore their interests, expectations, and aptitude for fishing.

### Vessel Maintenance by the Pictou Landing Band

Pictou Landing was the site of a vessel maintenance pilot project, undertaken with support from the Nova Scotia School of Fisheries and the assistance of vessel maintenance and design specialist, George Richard.

#### *Vessel maintenance study objectives:*

The overall objective of the pilot was to identify the training needed to ensure proper fishing boat maintenance. Specifically,

- Identify maintenance and repair problem areas;
- Identify specific areas where training is needed; and
- Identify most effective method of conducting training.

Routine maintenance, emergency repairs, and winterization of boats are priorities of First Nations Fishermen. Two levels of training will achieve competency in these areas, general training for all fishermen and specialized training to be delivered to a few community members.

*Safety is an important aspect of vessel maintenance training.*



### General Training

A top priority is general training that focuses on the needs of new and inexperienced boat Captains. Broad based in scope, this training will provide fishermen with very basic skills in routine boat maintenance and repairs to the hull and some simple equipment.

### Specialized Training

More extensive training is to be offered to a few community members to increase individual skill levels to that of repair specialist. Areas to be covered in the specialized training include: diesel and outboard engines; hydraulic, electrical, and electronic systems; and fiberglass and wooden boat repairs and modifications.

In the fall of 2000, the Pictou Landing Band will select band members to attend training and will work with the provincial fishery training institutes to design and deliver basic skill level courses and specialized training in the areas identified in the study.

### Responsible Fishing Module by Les Malécites de Viger

Centre spécialisé des pêches in conjunction with Les Malécites de Viger undertook the development of a training module on the Canadian Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing Operations.



Project initiative representative, Dianne Brière,  
Les Malécites de Viger.



Winterization of boats is a component of vessel maintenance training program.

### Objectives of the Module

To develop an understanding of:

- the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing Operations;
- the biological, technological, economic, and human principles of the Code that led to the adoption of the Code;
- the individual and collective role of the industry in implementing the principles of the Code;
- evolution of fishing activities and fishing gear technology in Canada;
- the positive and negative aspects of fishing gear; and
- stock evaluation principles and their limitations.

Fifteen hours of instruction focus on the historical development of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing Operations and how the Principles of the Code can be applied in day-to-day fishing activities through knowledge of the basic principles of marine biology, resource conservation, and stock management.

### First Nations

#### Summer Science Camp

A series of Summer Science Camps for First Nations students enrolled in grades seven and eight were held during July and August 2000. Organized by The Micmac-Maliseet Institute, one-week camps were held in the communities of Big Cove, Burnt Church, and Tobique.

The purpose of the camps was:

- to promote interest in science among Maliseet and Mi'kmaq students; and
- to increase student's knowledge and to build their confidence with regard to their ability to study and apply scientific principles.

The camp consisted of a broad range of science related, hands-on activities designed to encourage students to use scientific principles and their own creativity to solve problems. The relationship between Aboriginal history and culture and western science was explored.

The camps were planned in conjunction with the Worlds UNBound program, a summer science experience held at the University of New Brunswick, and will be followed by Super Science Enrichment Saturdays in the 2000-2001 school year.



### *Responsible Fishing Component*

As part of the summer camp experience, students were introduced to the concept of responsible fishing. A short, one-hour and thirty-minute program was put together, providing students with a brief history of the fishing industry in New Brunswick and an overview of the New Brunswick program.

Program for Responsible Fishing included:

- a) Concept of responsible fishing
- b) Fish biology and behavior
- c) Fishing gears
- d) Ghost Fishing
- e) Aquaculture

## **ATLANTIC REGION FIRST NATIONS FISHERMEN TRAINING CONFERENCE**

One hundred and ten First Nation representatives, twenty specialists from fishermen's training schools, and representatives from DFO attended the first ever First Nations Training Conference.

The conference held in the Ramada Hotel, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, From September 26-27, 2000 marked the



*Delegates attend the First Nations Fishermen's Training Conference.*

culmination of work begun in March by the Technical Working Group.

The Conference took place over a two-day period. On the first day, delegates were welcomed by conference co chairs, John G. Paul, Executive Director APC, and David Balfour, Director General, DFO. Their collective message was that a proactive approach to First Nations Fishermen's training was in full swing and that the experiences gained in one native community would be shared with other communities to the benefit of all.

In plenary, delegates were provided with overview presentations:

*Needs Assessment, APC*

*Needs Assessment, Conne River*

*Mentor Training, Big Cove*

*Candidate Screening, Conne River*

*Fishing Vessel Maintenance and Repair, Pictou Landing*

*Responsible Fishing Module  
Malécite de Viger*

*Summer Science Camp, Big Cove  
Band*



*First Nations Chiefs, Maloney and Marshall attend Conference.*



*Conference Co-Chairs: APC Executive Director, John G. Paul, and David Balfour, Director General, DFO.*



Five workshops, each chaired by a First Nations representative and facilitated by an Atlantic Policy Congress, representative provided a forum for delegates to express their views of the work carried out.

#### *Conference Exhibition*

First Nations Bands, the Fisheries Schools, the marine industry, and DFO set up displays on various projects, providing a venue for many exchanges and "informal" meetings.

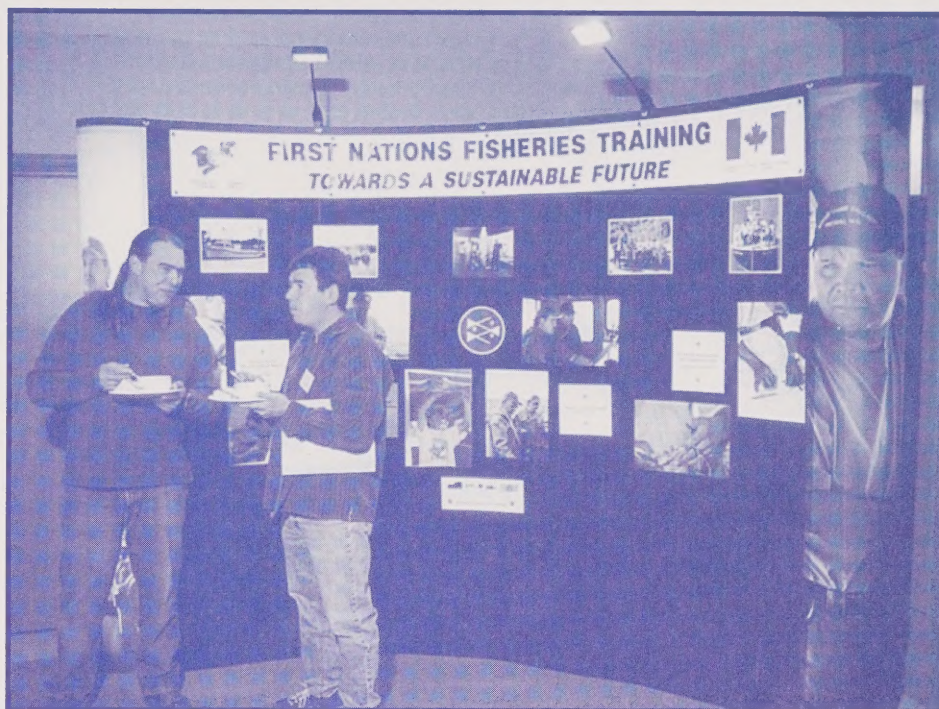
Videos depicting key aspects of the fishing vessel maintenance and mentoring training were displayed and well received.

The vessel maintenance video delivers a clear message - a crucial element of being the best is having the right tools and one of the best tools is a well-maintained vessel.

Outlined in the video are daily checklists to follow, common problems and how to trouble shoot, storage details and the need to maintain a log book of work, and the kinds of problems that require a call for expert help.

The video on mentoring describes the steps taken by the Big Cove Band. The result to establish a mentor program that will see a shift from training conducted by outside expertise to training conducted by First Nations mentors, allowing the learner to be surrounded by familiar language, culture, and people, thus making the learning experience stronger.

Following the Conference, an action plan was put in place to ensure First Nations Peoples were provided with the knowledge and skill to prepare their vessels for winter storage prior to freeze up.



*First Nations display of initiatives undertaken to train commercial fishermen.*

The plan calls for on-site technical advisory support to be provided at the community level throughout November and December of 2000.

Technical assistance will be arranged on a priority basis to all First Nations fishermen who request help. An expert in the field of vessel maintenance will work with vessel operators one-on-one to ensure proper care of vessels during winter storage.

#### *Outcomes of the Conference*

Delegates to the First Nations Training Conference recognized that great strides had been made to establish long-term, technical training of Native fishermen that links responsible fishing, technology, and fishing practices with stewardship of the marine resource. Much more is to be accomplished. As a result of the Conference, it is recognized that:

- Training initiatives begun with the Technical Group's support must continue;

- Regular meetings of the Technical Working Group should continue to ensure progress and maintain continuity;

- Training is a key strategic component of ensuring competent native captains and crews;

- All training must be community-centered, culturally-anchored, and linked to broad-based certification of native fishermen;

- In view of Training costs, it is essential to optimize training opportunities for the immediate and long-term benefit of First Nations Bands, and

- Technical training is the foundation on which other activities are build such as resource management, scientific and fishing enterprise.



## CONCLUSION

The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, the provincial training institutes, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans working in partnership through the Responsible Fishing Technology and Training Network have identified the some training needs of native fishermen, developed training to meet these needs, and established strategic plans to implement training of First Nations Fishermen. Initiatives carried out on an Atlantic-wide basis mark the beginning of a new era in training of native peoples involved in the commercial fishery.

The Technical Working Group will review the conference proceedings, making recommendations as to an appropriate action plan that will ensure continuation of the work already begun.

## POINT OF CONTACT

### Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat

P.O. Box 36  
Amherst, Nova Scotia  
B4H 3Y7

Tel: (902) 667 4007

Fax: (902) 667 7057

### Responsible Fishing Technology and Training Network

Marine Institute of Memorial University  
St. John's, NF  
A1C 5R3

Tel: (709) 778 0446

Fax: (709) 778 0384

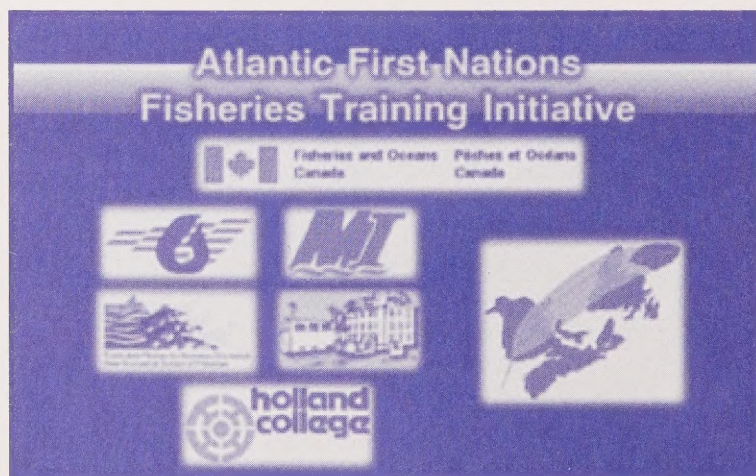
### Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Responsible Fishing Operations  
200 Kent Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1Z 0B6

Tel: (613) 990 0089

Fax: (613) 990 4231

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Cat.No.: Fs23-300/6-2000E  
ISBN: 0-662-29530-7











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